

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday 3rd March 2010

The decisions contained within these minutes may not be implemented until the expiry of the 5 working day call-in period which will run from 5th to 11th March. These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

PRESENT:

Councillor Francine Haerberling – Leader of the Council
Councillor Vic Pritchard – Adult Social Services and Housing
Councillor Terry Gazzard – Development and Major Projects
Councillor Charles Gerrish – Customer Services
Councillor Chris Watt – Children's Services

71 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair was taken by Councillor Francine Haerberling, Leader of the Council.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

72 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the Agenda

73 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Malcolm Hanney and David Hawkins.

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

75 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR(PERSON)

There was none. The Chair announced her intention to consider item 15 of the agenda after all the other items.

76 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 5 questions from the following people: Councillor John Bull, Councillor Tim Warren, Councillor Marie Longstaff, Councillor Bryan Organ, Councillor Nicholas Coombes.

[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]

77 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were none

78 MINUTES: WEDNESDAY 3rd February 2010

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haerberling, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3rd February 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

79 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS NOW REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

80 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

81 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS PUBLISHED SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING (Report 11)

The Cabinet noted the report.

82 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS & VIREMENTS – APRIL 2009 TO JANUARY 2010 (Report 12).

Councillor Paul Crossley made an *ad hoc* statement in which he expressed the view that the Council should take the opportunity to deal with the problem of Car Parking income by doing a proper analysis and feeding it into the budget process.

Councillor Francine Haerberling, in proposing the item, said that the recession was making it difficult to predict car park usage. She referred to the fact that £300k of the projected underspend was being transferred to meet the shortfall in car parking income.

Councillor Charles Gerrish seconded the proposal and agreed with Councillor Crossley's remarks but said that the Council was addressing the issue in the current budget and was planning far more rigorously than in the past.

Rationale

The report is presented as part of the reporting of financial management and budgetary control required by the Council.

Other Options Considered

None.

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haerberling, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To ASK Strategic Directors to continue to work towards managing within budget in the current year for their respective service areas, and to manage below budget where possible by not committing unnecessary expenditure, through tight budgetary

control;

- (2) To NOTE the reported revenue budget position;
- (3) To NOTE the Council's capital expenditure position in the financial year to the end of January and the year end projections;
- (4) To AGREE the proposed revenue virements;
- (5) To NOTE the changes in the capital programme;
- (6) To APPROVE the additions to the 2010/11 Capital Programme;
- (7) To AGREE the allocation of £300,000 from the Recession Reserve to Customer Services to help offset the impact of the recession on income budgets.

83 BATH & NE SOMERSET LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT REFRESH 2010/11 (Report 13).

Councillor Paul Crossley made an *ad hoc* statement and explained that he would have preferred to have seen a complete list of the LAA targets showing where the Council was on target, where behind target. He was very unhappy that the government was still changing targets, 2 years into a 4-year LAA. He asked for an indication of progress towards earning the reward grants.

Councillor John Bull made an *ad hoc* statement supporting the targets but asking for a clear indication of commitment. As an example, he referred to the fact that bus fares continued to rise while reliability deteriorated, despite the work done by the Council. He also felt strongly that the withdrawal of Home to School Transport could hardly be said to support the LAA target to improve the life chances of young people.

Councillor Francine Haerberling, in proposing the item, said that the refresh was only a light touch refresh and that no fundamental changes were being made.

Councillor Vic Pritchard seconded the proposal. He referred to paragraph 5.5, which listed 6 indicators with outstanding baselines. In some cases, this was because a new cohort was being used and the approval of the government was being awaited. He was pleased to say that the baseline for NI149 (adults receiving secondary mental health services being in settled accommodation) had that day been agreed with central government.

Councillor Charles Gerrish expressed sympathy with Councillor Bull's comments about bus services. He was pleased to say that he would be meeting with First Bus the next day, along with Cabinet members from partner authorities.

Councillor Chris Watt assured Councillor Bull that the Council did not merely pay lip service to the needs of looked after children; he outlined a number of ways in which very real improvements had recently been achieved for looked after children.

Rationale

The Local Area Agreement is a statutory agreement that sets out the priorities for the locality and identifies targets over three years. It is a key performance framework for the delivery of the Council Corporate Plan and the Sustainable Community Strategy, as it acts as a three year delivery plan.

Other Options Considered

None.

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haeberling, seconded by Councillor Vic Pritchard, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the refreshed draft of the Local Area Agreement for Bath & North East Somerset;

(2) To AGREE that the Chief Executive will sign the Local Area Agreement on behalf of the Council.

84 ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR BATH & NE SOMERSET 2010-2026 (Report 14).

Ian Bell (Executive Director of the Bath Chamber of Commerce and Initiative) made a statement welcoming the broad direction of the proposals. He asked however for more detail about how the proposals would work out in practice and how they would be made to deliver the intended improvements to the local economy.

Councillor Paul Crossley made an *ad hoc* statement in which he pointed out the difficulty of engaging with the MOD over their sites which might become available for redevelopment. He appealed to the Leader of the Council to press for a meeting with government to make the point that the MOD should work with the Council to plan the redevelopment of any land released by the MOD. He also said that the Cabinet should work to encourage independent traders and small groups into Southgate, in addition to the large chains which currently occupied much of the centre; and that the Cabinet should work actively to support community High Street areas.

Councillor Terry Gazzard, in proposing the item, noted the comments made by Ian Bell and by Councillor Paul Crossley. He promised to respond to both in due course. The aim of the strategy was to create a more productive economy by 2026 and the best areas for growth would be the creative, knowledge-based, technology and IT areas. Alongside this, there would be continued support for the area's tourist and retail activity.

Councillor Chris Watt seconded the proposal. Like Ian Bell, he felt that the critical issue was how the strategy would deliver the improvements it intended. He observed that two things would be required: space to grow (which must be encouraged by planners); and skills (which must be encouraged at the level of training). Given that the Council would imminently take over the role of the Learning and Skills Council, there would be an ideal opportunity to prioritise the allocation of funds to those courses which would support the economic aims of the area.

Councillor Charles Gerrish said that he was concerned that the report made assumptions about the level of growth which might not be realised. He therefore proposed an additional clause to the recommendations which would take account of levels of growth as these became clearer. The amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder.

Rationale

The Economic Strategy is the action plan for taking forward the Economic Development & Enterprise theme of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. It is based on statistical evidence drawn from reputable sources and anecdotal evidence collected from the business community and by expert public and private agencies. The action plan will be the basis for future work done by Council services, particularly the Economic Enterprise and Business Development team within Development and Regeneration.

Other Options Considered

None.

On a motion from Councillor Terry Gazzard, seconded by Councillor Chris Watt, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To SUPPORT the overall principles contained within the economic strategy;

(2) To SUPPORT the action plan contained within the economic strategy.

(3) To AGREE that the policy will be reviewed by Cabinet once the position regarding the level of economic growth becomes clearer.

[Clause (3) of the resolution was added as an amendment proposed by Councillor Charles Gerrish which was accepted by the proposer and seconder of the substantive motion]

85 ECONOMIC DOWNTURN – COUNCIL RESPONSE UPDATE (Report 16).

Councillor Paul Crossley made an *ad hoc* statement welcoming the paper and saying that he had found Appendix 2 particularly clear and helpful. He asked for more detail about two items appearing in Appendix 1: "Meet the Buyer" and "Loss of Fee Income".

Councillor Francine Haerberling proposed the item and said that Councillor Crossley's points would be addressed by Andrew Pate (Strategic Director of Resources).

Councillor Charles Gerrish seconded the proposal.

Andrew Pate explained that the loss of fees related to car parking receipts.

Councillor Terry Gazzard said that the Meet the Buyer events were meetings of the Council and local business. One event was held in Midsomer Norton and one in Bath.

Rationale

The report provides an update in relation to use of the recession reserve and proposed future uses; and the impact of the recession on the local economy, local communities and the Council and local actions.

Other Options Considered

All of the proposed actions are optional except those already in place to ensure there is a prudent approach inherent in the Council's budgets.

On a motion from Councillor Francine Haerberling, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the allocation of the remaining balance within the recession reserve to offset income shortfalls resulting from the recession, and to delegate this to the S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Chief Executive;

(2) To NOTE the contents of the update report and request that this be taken into account in services planning and future work of Overview & Scrutiny Panels.

86 WEST OF ENGLAND DELIVERY & INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK 20120/11 TO 2019/20 (Report 15).

Councillor Paul Crossley made an *ad hoc* statement in which he asked for information on progress made with the Homes and Communities Agency; and said that the proposals before Cabinet appeared to be yet another example of recreating Avon by another name. He observed that the Council had an excellent track record of delivering projects, so should offer its expertise to the West of England Partnership in preference to setting up a duplicate regional project management operation.

The Leader sought an assurance from all Cabinet Members that they had read the Public Interest test paper and considered the factors for withholding and disclosing appendices a to O, marked exempt. It was then moved by Councillor Terry Gazzard, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish and

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To AGREE that appendices A to O contain exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 because they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information); and that having applied the public interest test it is considered that the public interest is best served by withholding the information.

Councillor Terry Gazzard, in proposing the main item, said that the proposed framework was the result of detailed and complex negotiations. It sought to coordinate investment in housing and jobs. All 3 of the locations proposed by this Council had been accepted for inclusion in the Framework – Bath City Riverside, Somer Valley; Somerdale and Keynsham.

Councillor Charles Gerrish seconded. He said the proposals were about where the investment would come from, not so much about delivery. It was a sub-regional way of attracting investment from central government. He welcomed the recognition that some areas of Keynsham were in need of inward investment.

Councillor Francine Haerberling responded to the point made by Councillor Crossley by saying that the West of England Partnership was not recreating Avon – its effect was to enable the Council to make its arguments to government with the authority of the whole region instead of as a relatively small authority. She understood some of the reservations but felt that the proposals were the only way forward.

Rationale

The West of England Delivery and Infrastructure Investment Framework will provide a framework for attracting and enhancing public and private investment in housing and jobs in the sub-region. It will set out a clear prioritised strategic framework within which the house building industry, registered social landlords and national agencies can plan for the future.

Other Options Considered

None.

On a motion from Councillor Terry Gazzard, seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(2) To ENDORSE the West of England Delivery & Infrastructure Investment Framework 2010/11 – 2019/20 subject to an annual review of delivery and priorities through the West of England Partnership Board;

(3) To ENDORSE the 2010/11 Delivery & Infrastructure Investment Plan concluded with the Homes & Communities Agency.

The meeting ended at 5:55pm

Chair(person) _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services